

REMARKS

Applicants submit this Preliminary Amendment in connection with the pending application on the above-referenced invention.

In the Office Action dated February 23, 2004, claims 2-11, 19, and 20 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter, and the remaining claims were rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,027,623 to Ohkwawa. Applicants subsequently filed a Response on May 24, 2004, along with a Request for Continued Examination (RCE), amending claims 2, 4, and 28 to overcome the rejections raised in the Office Action under Section 112, second paragraph, and arguing over the cited reference.

Presently, Applicants submit this Preliminary Amendment to expedite issuance of a patent. Specifically, Applicants have cancelled claims 1-46 and submitted new claims 47-91, which contain the subject matter of allowable claims 2-11, 19, and 20.

Claim 47 contains the subject matter of allowable claim 2, and claims 48-60, which depend from claim 47 and contain all of the limitations thereof, represent the subject matter of original dependent claims 3-12 and 15-17.

Claim 61 contains the subject matter of allowable claim 3, and claims 62-73, which depend from claim 61 and contain all of the limitations thereof, represent the subject matter of original dependent claims 4-12 and 15-17.

Claim 74 contains the subject matter of allowable claim 8, and claims 75-85, which depend from claim 74 and contain all of the limitations thereof, represent the subject matter of original dependent claims 4-7, 9-12, and 15-17.

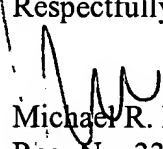
Finally, claim 86 contains the subject matter of allowable claim 19, and claims 87-91, which depend from claim 86 and contain all of the limitations thereof, represent the subject matter of original dependent claims 20-21 and 24-26.

Applicants make these amendments solely to expedite issuance of a patent on the above-identified application. Applicants make no admission with respect to the propriety of the rejections set forth in the Office Action, and in fact, expressly disagree with same. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to file a continuing application to cover the invention(s) of the cancelled claims.

Claims 1-46 were cancelled, and claims 47-91 were added by this Preliminary Amendment. No new matter is believed to have been added. Claims 47-91 are pending in this action. A Notice of Allowance in this case is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,


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